

# So products reach the customer faster: Knauf is building a new logistics centre

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**The Knauf Group is continuing to build on its commitment to Rottleberode as a location. Why?**

**Materlik:** The location is one of our biggest and thus one of our most important in Germany. We produce around 800,000 tonnes of plaster each year there. So we haven't invested around €100 million since 1990 without good reason. Each year alone, €2 to €3 million flows into the necessary maintenance processes, which also flushes money into the region. In this respect, the plant isn't just an important location for the plaster manufacturer Knauf; it's also highly significant for the region.

**Which investments are to be made in 2013?**

**Materlik:** We're planning to invest €10 million, which is set to – among other things – flow into expanding the plant infrastructure. For that alone, we're setting aside between €4 and €5 million. To date, we have purchased new machines, renovated production lines, renewed channels and built a clarification plant. Now, the building and façade are to be renewed, among other things. But there are also new projects in the pipeline, which is why a new logistics centre will be built this year.

**What do you need that for?**

**Materlik:** Knauf offers a large product range. Plasters, paints, stones – everything you need for interior design. All of these things have to reach the customer as quickly as possible. Our buyers are often large construction sites who can't afford to wait on goods being delivered for any longer than is necessary. For this reason, we already have a central warehouse at our Iphofen site near Würzburg. From there, goods are sent in all directions. Our aim is for orders to be delivered to any construction site in Germany within 24 hours. We need a new logistics centre to shorten the routes to customers in Northern and Eastern Germany in the future. And that's what we're going to build in Rottleberode.

**Which requirements does it have to satisfy?**

**Materlik:** At present, we are building a hall, which is 10 metres tall and has a surface area of around 10,000 square metres. To be able to run it as a logistics centre, special requirements, such as installing a heatable warehouse system and also a special piece of software for modern warehousing, are necessary. In spite of the long winter, we are currently making good time, so we are confident that we will have it up-and-running in autumn of this year. To this end, we are appointing another four well-trained warehouse logistics specialists. All going well, this demand will certainly continue to increase.

**In addition to the logistics centre, money is also flowing into a new research project. Can you say anything more on this matter at the present time?**

**Materlik:** We are working on that together with the University of Applied Sciences in Nordhausen. Around €1 million is flowing into the project, which deals with the waste products generated when processing plaster or timber and the issue of what we can do with it. The University of Applied Sciences is currently analysing the material flows, dissecting the waste products in their components and evaluating them for us. In the best-case scenario, we'll end up with a patent-suitable procedure during the course of the collaboration.

**You've been relying on collaboration with regional universities of applied sciences for a long time now. Why?**

**Materlik:** Cooperation is very important to us. It was for this reason that we even concluded a contract with the University of Applied Sciences in Nordhausen. We have been working closely in the areas of process and electrical engineering for a long time now. The collaboration is mutually beneficial. We offer the students opportunities for work experience, for instance. In return, we can forge contacts with local specialists early on and keep them here in the region.

**Do you have problems when it comes to filling open vacancies?**

**Materlik:** No, we don't, actually. We pay agreed wages and overtime, so specialists are in a good position working for us. Also, it's part of our company philosophy that managers live in the region. For a company to prosper, contact with regional committees and players is extremely important. The only way to nurture this contact is if you're embedded in the region. I am convinced of that.

**You don't come from Südharz yourself. Have you made the region your home now?**

**Materlik:** I come from North Rhine-Westphalia, but I've been here for 15 years now, am married to a local woman and have also really made a life for myself here. I know every single one of our 130 employees by name.

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